National Tribune.

"TO CARE FOR HIM WHO HAS BORNE THE BATTLE, AND FOR HIS WIDOW AND ORPHANS."

ESTABLISHED 1877—NEW SERIES. WASHINGTON, D. C., THURSDAY, MAY 31, 1888. VOL. VII—NO. 31—WHOLE NO. 355.

NEWS FROM DONELSON.

Hours of Suspense to Friends of the Soldiers After the Battle.

WAITING AT CAIRO.

Under Way at Last Up the Tennessee River.

ON BOARD THE UNCLE SAM.

A Graphic Story of Heroic Days.

BY MRS. JOHN A. LOGAN.

THE news from Fort Henry made a profound impression upon the people of the North. They realized then as not before that the war for the preservation of the Union was a serious matter; that it was to be a long and trying experience, in which the Union army was at last fairly embarked. Our forces had met the enemy on Southern soil and won the first great contest in the West. They knew now that the war meant the meeting of the foe at every step and no retreat unless driven back by his superior force.

All eyes were now turned to Fort Donelson as the plan of Gen. Grant seemed to dawn upon the people. They saw that the capture of Nashville and the railroads beyond, and a union with Gen. Buell's forces, must be contemplated by the commander. They were aware that fortifications had been erected upon the river at Dover, under the skillful direction of Gen. Polk, a man of reputed genius and experience, and not unnaturally they had an exaggerated idea of them as something prodigious in strength and in every way formidable, if not absolutely impregnable. They knew, also, that the country lying between the two rivers (Tennessee and Cumberland) was intersected by innumerable small streams and deep morasses, and at that time this country was almost covered with ice and water. Just enough had leaked out from the dispatches between Gen. Grant and the War Department to make it known positively that the troops would go directly from Fort Henry across the country to Fort Donelson, while at the same time the boats would go around by the river and co-operate with the land forces in the siege, as they had done in the case of Fort Henry. It was not expected, however, that the gunboats could reduce Fort Donelson as quickly as they had Fort Henry, without much aid from the army.

The weather continued so unpropitious that it was feared the army would hardly be able to reach Dover, and that if they should they would be in such a condition after their exposure in the mud and water under foot, and the sleet and bitterly-cold winds about them, they could do nothing, and might fail in their attempt to capture the works. With anxiety something akin to that of the condemned awaiting execution, the people listened to news from the front.

The telegraph office was besieged night and day, and the

STREETS WERE FULL OF DISTRESSED MEN AND WOMEN,

each looking with penetrating eagerness into the face of every person from whom they could hope to receive the least tidings. They were wrought up to the highest pitch of anxiety for those whom all knew were freezing and suffering somewhere around Fort Donelson.

At last the dreaded message came. It was appalling. The dispatches announced that a number of Illinois's best and bravest officers and men were killed outright, while hundreds of others were wounded. They knew that of that number few would survive, because of the exposure to which they had been subjected during the siege. Through ice and snow and merciless storms of hail and rain they pushed their way to the environs of the strongly-fortified little town of Dover. There, hungry, wet and cold, they had been obliged to lie down without daring to make fires, lest the enemy should discover the lights and open their batteries upon them before they were in a position to reply.

The news spread over the whole country as swiftly as it could be carried by the electric wires, and from every quarter the people rushed to Cairo, hoping to be allowed to go to the victorious battlefield. They wanted to care for the wounded and bring home their loved ones who had fallen, that they might sleep in the churchyards of their kindred and friends. Among the number who hastened to Cairo to embark on the first vessel destined for the army was myself. I was distracted by the first dispatches, which reported

COL. LOGAN KILLED

and Lieut.-Col. J. H. White and many others killed or wounded. These messages were received at 10 o'clock Monday morning.

The siege had ended on Friday evening before. There was no possible chance to reach Cairo until 4:30 o'clock the next morning. It is impossible to turn back to those agonizing times, now long past, and picture them in the vividness of their reality. Suffering all the anxiety of such a blow, and surrounded by others like afflicted, I waited until 1:30 a. m. to take the train. The cars were full of anxious, grief-stricken men and women, and my heart, weary with the burden of my own sorrow and seeing the wo of others, sank within me.

With scarcely standing room we were hurried over the rough road as rapidly as they thought they could travel in those days, arriving at Cairo at 4:30 in the morning. We found at that weird hour all was confusion and excitement. Every face wore a look of anxiety. The southern Illinois troops were engaged in the expedition, but it was very hard to learn of the fate of individuals. The first thing I did after our arrival was to go directly to the commanding officer at post headquarters, to secure if possible permission to go up the river and to find out which boat started first with the supplies that we knew would surely be sent. Hurrying to headquarters, I was relieved by the glad tidings that Col. Logan was not killed. He was, however, severely wounded. Impatience succeeded despair, and I begged earnestly of the commanding officer for the coveted pass. With moistened eyes he assured me of his regret that a military necessity forbade him to grant my request. The orders were imperative that no person should be allowed to go up the river. He said I could not have the pass. "The wounded will be brought down in a few days," he concluded. Telling him that should he ever take the field and be overtaken by the misfortunes of war I hoped a military necessity would not keep his wife away from him, I turned and almost staggered out of the office. I had but one thought in my mind, and that was to go up the river to Fort Donelson, if I went in a skiff rowed by a contraband.

Remembering that dear old Col. Dunlap was the Post Quartermaster, and that he would know which boat would start out first with the supplies that must be sent to the army, I was not long in finding him. He was busy ordering stores for some steamer. I knew his position, and that he would not dare to tell me what I wished most to know. I hardly knew what to say or do. He was very kind and sympathetic, and I ventured to ask him: "Colonel, if you desired to go to Fort Donelson immediately, which boat would you board?"

His tender heart could not inflict another blow upon one half frantic with grief and suspense. He came close to me and whispered in my ear,

"THE CITY OF MEMPHIS."

With breathless haste I almost ran to the shore and down the muddy bank, threading my way as best I could among the bustling stevedores who were loading the stores. Watching my opportunity I walked the slippery gangway until halted by the guard

OFF TO THE OTHER BOAT.

on the deck. I told him I belonged to Col. Dunlap's family, and that I was to go on board to wait for him; that he would come very soon. After consultation with the Captain, it was finally decided that I could wait in the cabin for Col. Dunlap.

My father and brother-in-law, T. M. Logan, had accompanied me to Cairo, but learning of the difficulty of procuring permits, they decided to let me try to get one first, and if I should succeed for myself I might be able to get another for one of them to go with me.

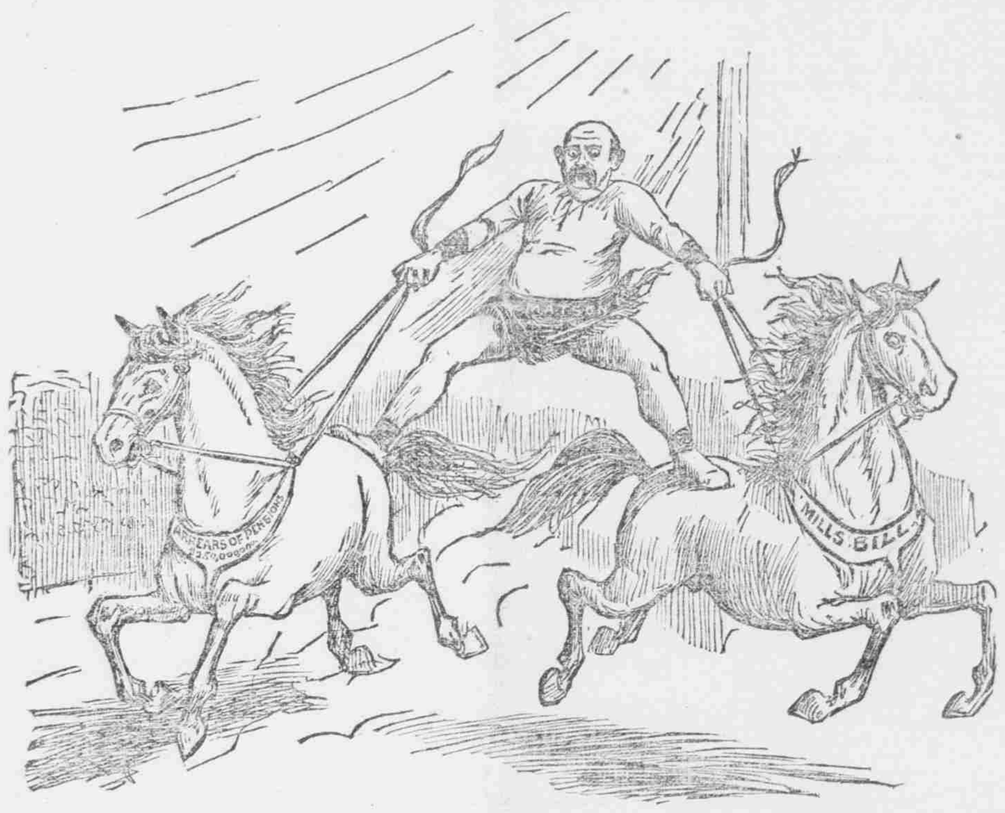
After getting on board the boat I wrote a note to my father to let him know where I was, and to ask him to send a package hastily put together for the journey. I sent the note by a cabin-boy to the hotel. All day long they kept loading the boat, stowing away stores in every conceivable corner. I watched every vessel to see if any moved out heading up the river. A number came down and rounded to. Among them was one loaded down to the water's edge with human beings. All were anxious to know who they could be and what it meant. Suddenly

THE MYSTERY WAS SOLVED.

They were prisoners from Fort Donelson, and a melancholy looking lot they were. I will never forget the impression made upon me as I looked upon these men huddled together on the lower deck, the guard and the hurricane deck, poorly clad in every color and quality of material. Many had bed-quilts, blankets, pieces of carpet and home-spun cloth, formed into a cloak or wrap by doubling one end over and running a piece of rope or cord through the fold and tying it around the neck. Those who could not get this makeshift for an overcoat looked pinched and blue with cold. Their hungry, gaunt faces and forlorn condition made one pity them, and wonder why they had left their homes and friends to suffer in a cause that could do them no good even were it successful. They had been hurried down to Cairo to be sent North to Camp Douglas, at Chicago, or to Camp Chase, at Dayton, O. The discomforts they were enduring, the change of climate at that inclement season, and the prospect of going to a still more rigorous one, made them appear doleful beyond description. They were not long in being transferred to the cars to continue their unhappy journey.

The weary hours dragged on and we were not under way. The day seemed interminable. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon the Captain of the City of Memphis came and said that Capt. —— wanted to see me. Recognizing immediately the name of a former client of my husband's, and catching

WHICH WILL HE LET GO?



Col. Matson's Agonizing Effort to Ride Two Horses Going in Opposite Directions.

like a drowning one at a straw, I felt sure that the announcement was a good omen. I went to meet him. He told me that having learned I was on the City of Memphis, and wished so much to go to Fort Donelson, he had rowed over to ask me to go with him. He declared that he would soon pull out, and would certainly reach Donelson before the City of Memphis; that Gov. Morton, of Indiana, had chartered his boat to go to look after the troops of his State engaged in the siege; that the Governor and his staff were then on board and would soon be ready to start, and that if I would go with him

HE WOULD LET ME DOWN OVER THE SIDE

of the Memphis into the yawl lying there, and would certainly take me safely to his old friend, Col. Logan. Possessed of but one desire—to join my husband—I followed him and we were soon under way.

The Captain's boat was a small stern-wheel steamer, and I can still hear the panting of her engine as she labored up the stream, with blocks of ice obstructing the channel all the way. Eating but little and sleeping less, we could only look out on the river, which at this season of high water had stretched far over its banks, covering the lowlands and making a formidable torrent.

In the morning at about 9 o'clock we came in sight of Fort Donelson, and saw the Stars and Stripes waving above its ramparts. Despite the sorrow and anxiety of our hearts we could not help greeting it with joy. As we approached the landing we saw the headquarters flag flying from the Uncle Sam. Instinctively I felt that Col. Logan was on that boat. I knew Gen. Grant would have him there if he was still alive. I asked a friend to call to the officers standing on the deck of the Uncle Sam as we neared that boat, and inquire if they knew where Col. Logan was. They looked at us a moment and then the reply came back: "He's on this boat. Bring Mrs. Logan here." Our Captain dropped along side, and I was soon mounting the stairs to find my husband stretched on a cot in the forward cabin. Capt. Churchill, of the 11th Ill., lay very near on another cot, and many others had been there, but had been sent that day to the Cairo, Mound City and St. Louis hospitals, and some to their homes.

Thin and wan, Col. Logan looked like death. A fearful illness had followed his exposure and wound. The doctors in-

FINDING HER HUSBAND.

sisted that his arm must be amputated at the shoulder. He had lain all this time in the same clothes he had worn in the siege. It was Thursday, and he had been carried from the field the Saturday before. The loss of blood from his wound had been so great that he was too weak to stand on his feet, he had a scorching fever, and was altogether in an alarming condition. Devoutly thankful that I had been permitted to see him alive, I watched and nursed him for many long days and nights. One lady had probably kept him alive by her tender care, Mrs M. M. Bayne, of Quincy, Ill., whose gallant husband, Colonel of the 55th Ill., afterward lost his right arm.

Gen. Grant's headquarters was in the ladies' cabin, where all the business connected with the army under him was transacted. The Orderlies, with their dangling swords, were busy passing to and fro with orders and dispatches. Col. Logan was determined to know all that was going on,

COL. LOGAN LEADING HIS REGIMENT.

and had never given up the command of his regiment. He directed everything through a junior Captain, his Lieutenant-Colonel, J. H. White, and two of the senior Captains having been killed, while the other officers were seriously wounded. His Major was Provost-Marshal at Cairo, and did not reach Fort Donelson for several days.

Gen. Grant was extremely kind, doing all in his power to make us comfortable. He told us all the cheerful news he knew, and wrote a strong letter to the Secretary of War, recommending Col. Logan's promotion to a Brigadier-Generalship. He told my husband that he was determined, if possible, to have men with him who would know no delay or defeat, and who would win such victories as would relieve them of

THE CAPTIOUS DALLYING OF SUPERIOR OFFICERS

that had hindered every movement for many months. He was preparing to move around to Savannah, a small town on the Tennessee River.

Realizing the necessity of getting Col. Logan to a more quiet place, and because the Uncle Sam was to take Gen. Grant and his headquarters to Savannah, I had him removed to a house in Dover that the Surgeon of the 31st Ill. had secured as a regimental hospital.

Maj. Kuykendal had arrived from Cairo, and we finally persuaded my husband to turn over the command of the regiment to him. For three weeks we staid in the desolate house, despoiled of every comfort it had ever possessed. We had simply a small tin pan, a little camp-kettle, and a skillet in which to cook all we ate.

Soldiers are full of resources in providing ways and means, and so, aided by the genius of one of the faithful 31st, who was with us constantly, we soon had a johnny-cake board polished and ready for use. By heating it quite hot and turning it up in front of a good wood fire, we made delicious corn-bread and beaten biscuit, cooking first one course, and when done putting it on hot stones to keep it warm. Thus we were enabled to prepare quite palatable meals with the one pan and skillet.

Many of the officers came to see us and told me the most thrilling stories of the march of 12 miles across the country from Fort Henry, through almost impassable mud and water, and how for 48 hours they had lain on the ground, the sleet freezing as fast as it fell, until their clothes were literally covered with ice. It required all their ingenuity to keep their ammunition dry, but not a murmur was heard as they lay on their arms patiently waiting for the dawn on the morrow. The rations in their haversacks were anything but inviting, but kept them from famishing and they ate them with a relish. They told how the wind blew and the sharp points of the sleet cut their faces and ears, and chilled the very blood in their veins. Daylight only brought relief from the horrors of darkness. They related how they discovered at daybreak the attempt of the enemy to flank our army or cut their way out, and it was not long before that part of the line was engaged in a conflict that was doomed to be contested to the death. The men of the West and the South, with the same experience and temperament, met like Greek meeting Greek, and one or the other was bound to fall. The battle continued until all along the line, from left to right, it was a hand-to-hand fight. Toward 4 o'clock in one part of the line it was discovered that the ammunition was giving out, and that the greatest skill must be used, or they would be left without a round in their cartridge-boxes with which to repel the impetuous foe. They expected every moment that the enemy would fall upon them with a tremendous force of their well-rested and well-equipped men.

The brave old 31st and 11th Ill. were supporting each other, and

HAD PLEDGED THEIR FAITH

to keep that section of the besieged forces in check, and to allow no break in their own front. No braver or truer men ever stood in battle; no regiments ever had braver commanders than Col. John A. Logan and Col. Ransom. Every man there was ready to follow them to victory or a soldier's death. Both commanders saw the crisis impending and stood aghast. They sent to the rear for ammunition and reinforcements, but none came. Almost their last rounds were gone, and nearer and nearer came the enemy. They had been repulsed again and again, but what could they do should another avalanche of rebel bullets sweep down upon them?

Col. Logan proposed that the 31st stretch out its lines and hold them until the last shot was fired; then, that Col. Ransom should take their place with the grand old 11th as the 31st drew out and formed again in the rear. It was hoped that by these tactics the 11th could hold out

UNTIL AMMUNITION CAME.

Col. Ransom agreed to the proposition. How well they kept the faith and held their place the list of killed and wounded officers and men of the 31st tells best. Col. Logan was wounded in the shoulder; Lieut.-Col. J. H. White was killed instantly while leading a charge; every senior Captain was either killed or wounded, and many of the men were borne from the field, or lay dead where they had fallen. When they had fired the last shot and still no ammunition came, and the battle was unabated, they fell back, and the 11th moved forward and took their place. A long trench filled with the dead of the 11th on that field told the tale of their courage and the gallant holding of the line. Col. Ransom was wounded, and many officers of his regiment were either killed or wounded. Almost

EXHAUSTED AND FROZEN,

the brave fellows came up to their work like veterans of many battles. Eagerly they gazed toward the fort, expecting to see the troops of the garrison sally forth to reinforce those already outside. But the gunboats and artillery kept up a shower of well-directed iron hail that held them busy inside the fortifications. Undaunted, all night they lay upon their arms waiting for the dawn which should bring a renewal of the assault. They were ready for it, but it was never made. Gen. Grant had conveyed the intelligence to Gen. Buckner that he proposed "to move upon his works immediately," and, without further resistance, the rebel commander decided to make an "unconditional surrender."

While expecting, therefore, to be again in the death-grapple, the soldiers of that gallant army were greeted with the picture of the white flag floating from the staff within the fort. Shouts went up from many throats, electrifying the weary troops and inspiring their commander with the glorious news of the victory won. Instead of hearing the order to advance, they were soon engaged in the rejoicings incident to success and relief from the weary struggle with the elements and the enemy through which they had passed. A detail from each company and regiment was made to go in search of the wounded and to collect the dead.

Troops marched inside the fortifications to guard the prisoners and man the fort. Others were ordered to encamp on the field, while still others pushed forward to Clarkesville and Nashville, arriving barely in time to see the flying foe, who left everything behind and joined Johnston's army.

A Boy Spy in Dixie.

Service Under the Shadow of the Hangman's Noose.

RAILROAD WRECKERS.

Intercepting Messages Over Rebel Wires.

NEWS OF DEFEAT.

The Stoneman Command in a Very Tight Place.

[COPYRIGHT, 1887.]

I THINK I have already said that I cannot give the exact route or path of Stoneman's great raid. It does not make much difference which route we took; all that I am positive about is that it was a very crooked path, but we got there all the same. One of the towns we reached while on the route was Louisa Court-house. In Virginia all the Countyseats are named after the County. Louisa Court-house was not much of a town to capture, to be sure, but it was directly in rear of Gen. Lee's army. In this quiet old place we loitered for a half day or more, while our forces were up and down the roads tearing up railroad tracks and burning bridges.

Somewhere in this neighborhood is the railroad running between Gordonsville and Richmond. This track was torn up, and all the railroad route to Manassas Gap and Washington city from the South was made useless.

HOW A RAILROAD IS DESTROYED.

Most of the readers know how a railroad track is destroyed in war, so I shall describe it very briefly. Of course we were supplied with the "tools" for drawing spikes from the ties quickly. A number of rails at a certain point are lifted; the cross-ties are

CUTTING THE WIRES.

then taken up and built into a sort of open-work brick-kiln-shaped pile several feet high, being quite narrow at the top. On top of this pile of well oil-soaked, weather-dried logs are laid the iron rails which have been lifted from them. These are placed so that the middle of the rail rests on the ties, the long, heavy ends being balanced over the sides. A fire is kindled in the tie-pile; the grease in the ties, perhaps aided a little by more combustibles, soon makes as fierce a fire as comes from the top of a furnace. The ties burn up slowly, but with such a constant heat that the iron rails soon become red hot. While in this soft condition the overhanging weight of the long ends causes them to bend and twist out of shape. This renders the rails utterly useless for a railroad track. They become old scrap-iron, and must be worked over at a mill before they can be used again as rails. It cannot be straightened out by any process that will admit of its being again used in rebuilding the destroyed tracks.

I saw at one point on the track where these hot rails had been lifted off the fire and twisted around the trunks of trees. After they had cooled in that shape, the only way to get the old iron was to cut down the tree and lift the loop over the stump. Of course the rebels could repair the tracks in time, but to do this required several days in which new rails could be transported to the spot.

Right here I will say that one of the purposes of this raid to Richmond was to destroy the immense Tredegar Iron Works on the James River. This large establishment supplied the Confederates with nearly all their iron materials, such as cannon, shells, bridge material, and a thousand other articles necessary in war. To have effected its demolition would have most seriously crippled the rebellion.

Of course the details for this anticipated railroad destruction had been carefully planned before we started. All the necessary appliances for the work had been brought along. Each officer knew exactly what he was expected to do, and as a rule they all successfully completed their tasks.

It was expected that I should be of service in tapping the telegraph wires, and to me was left, in a general way, the oversight of the telegraph business.

The General and his staff, to which I was attached, did not, of course, ride in the extreme advance. Imagine my surprise and disgust on coming up with a party of these railroad wreckers, to find that they had exceeded their instructions and cut down nearly

A MILE OF TELEGRAPH POLES

to burn with their ties. They had gathered the wire up and piled it in heaps on the fires. This was exactly what I did not want done. My purpose was to first tap the wires and attach my pocket instrument and have some fun out of it. Another reason for disappointment was that I had discovered—if not patented—a safer and surer method of destroying telegraph lines. Of course a mile of wire is more easily transported than a mile of rails. Two men can carry a half-mile coil of wire. A telegraph line can be rebuilt and used with the wire lying on trees or even fences, in dry weather. Therefore the cutting out of a mile of poles was not an effectual interruption. My plan was—and I call attention of future war-telegraphers to it—to first take some of the small magnet wire, which is so thin as to be almost invisible, attach this to the insulator-hook or wire at the top of the pole, lead the thread of wire down the pole, imbedding it if possible in some seam or crack to further conceal it, and at the bottom of the pole run the other point of wire into the ground. If this is done, be the wire even as small as a silk thread, and made of copper, all electric communication is effectually conducted off its channel. Each current or wave or signal sent from either side of this wire will take the short cut and follow it to the ground, where it becomes lost. Neither side can converse or signal over such an obstruction, and they do not know the character or location of the trouble, as the wire works as usual. Of course each operator will wonder why the other does not respond to his signals, and absence is taken for granted as the reason.

I was supplied with a quantity of this fine copper wire. Finding the point nearest Gordonsville where the wire had not been torn down, I attached a thread of this thin wire to the line-wire and led it to the earth so as to be concealed. I knew very well, from long experience, that the telegraph operator at Gordonsville would know from the loss of all circuit that the wire had been destroyed at some point, and it would become his first duty to send a man out along the road to find out and repair the damage.

We did not want Gordonsville to know that we, the Yankee raiders, were the destroyers. The piece of wire which I attached to the ground made the circuit short but complete, so that the wire worked as usual up to that concealed point, but no further. When the lineman should come out to repair breaks he would find the wire broken. This he would repair speedily and return to Gordonsville without discovering the little ground-trap that I had set. In time it would be discovered by a system of tedious and expensive tests from pole to pole, but this would probably consume several days. A broken or destroyed gap of wire could be at once discovered and rebuilt in a few hours.

Another plan, which I adopted for the first time in war on this raid, was even more effectual than the ground-tap, is explained further on for the benefit of future warriors. On that same evening, at a point some distance below this destroyed gap of railroad and telegraph wire, I drew the wire down from a convenient pole in a secluded wayside grove.

TAPPING THE TELEGRAPH WIRES.

It was about sundown when I, with a few helpers, was dancing around a pole when the General and staff rode by. Seeing us engaged in this mysterious way, their curiosity was of course aroused, and we were questioned, the General and his entire staff stopping to watch the result of tapping the rebel wires.

Unfortunately, the premature cutting of the wires that morning had interfered with my plans for working quietly and secretly in this direction. When I got my little relay attached to the wire, you may imagine with what nervousness I took hold of the adjustment spring to feel for a signal from a distant rebel operator, probably in Richmond.

At first there were no signs of life on the wire. It was while my face was turned away from the instrument, talking to General Stoneman of the mistake of the men in cutting the wire, that I heard a faint click on the magnet. I turned from the General abruptly, bent my ear to the little ticker, and listened with every nerve and sense strained.

A second signal was soon made, which was lost to my ear by some loud talking among the staff. I nervously turned to them and ordered General Stoneman and his staff to "keep still."

That's a fact. The General laughed quietly, but didn't dare to open his mouth again.

I made the signal for interrogation or question, which all operators understand to mean "I did not hear you," or "What did you say?" The answer came back "Sign," which means give your signature, or your office. I judged at once that, whoever it was, he got wind of the raid and was suspicious. I merely said, as any operator was likely to do after a wire had been interrupted, "Is this wire O K now?" The answer came back from some point that I dare not attempt to locate by a question: "The wire has been down all day."

I was compelled to break off the talk by wire to gratify the curiosity of the General and staff by an explanation. I told them that I had "got" somebody, but did not know who, and was afraid to give myself away by asking any questions. The General suggested, "You had better say that the Yankees cut the wires, and that they have been driven back home again."

As suggested by the General I telegraphed:

"The wire was cut by those Yankees on horseback, but it's fixed now."

"Is that so? Who is it?" were the questions fired at me.